

Health Care Services over the Holidays: Know your options.

Markham, ON (December 17, 2019) – The winter season brings increased demand for health services. Knowing where to go for care is key this time of year.

Begin by calling Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000, or your family doctor, nurse practitioner or their on-call service. If they are not available, visit a local urgent care centre or walk-in clinic. To find an urgent care centre or walk-in clinic in your community, visit the following online resource: centralhealthline.ca. This easy-to-use website allows you to search for health care services by service type and postal code, and provides detailed information about that service, including hours of operation over the holidays.

“With the holiday season approaching, we know that hospital volumes tend to increase during this time,” says Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Emergency Department Physician Lead for the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN). “If you do not require emergency care, it’s best to avoid the hospital Emergency Department and access other options in your community that can provide the care you need.”

Dr. Kumar also stresses the importance of getting a free flu shot from your local clinic, physician or pharmacy to help you stay healthy during the winter and over the holiday season. “Getting your flu shot is a quick and easy way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu,” says Dr. Kumar. To find out where you can get your flu shot, visit centralhealthline.ca and click on the “Flu Shot Clinics” button.

In addition to getting the flu shot, follow these tips to help you be prepared and stay healthy:

- Ensure you have all your prescriptions filled before the holidays
- Practice good hand hygiene and wash your hands often
- Make sure all medical equipment (e.g. inhalers, respirators, diabetic supplies) are in good working order
- Ask your doctor’s office about its holiday hours and what back-up coverage it offers or recommends when the office is closed

NOTE: If you are in need of serious medical attention, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency department.

For more information, contact:

Cheryl Cheung, Director of Communications at cheryl.cheung@LHINS.on.ca or 905-948-1872 ext. 2295